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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 6848

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS FLASH 2223

RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE 7521

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE 1534

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4041

EXDIS

DAMASCUS FOR HABIB

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/9/88 (DILLON, ROBERT S.) OR-M

TAGS: MOPS, LE, SY, IS

SUBJECT: ~~ISRAELI-SYRIAN CONFRONTATIONS~~

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. BOTH MAJOR BEIRUT RADIO STATIONS (OFFICIAL RADIO LEBANON AND PHALANGE VOICE OF LEBANON) ARE REPORTING HEAVY ISRAELI-SYRIAN CLASHES IN THE VICINITY OF THE DAMASCUS HIGHWAY, JUST EAST OF SAHAR. RADIO LEBANON SAYS SYRIAN AIRCRAFT ARE ATTACKING ISRAELI POSITIONS AT AIN ZHALTA WITH ISRAELIS DOING THE SAME TO THE SYRIANS AT HAMMANA. VOICE OF LEBANON ADDS THAT SYRIANS POSITIONS AT DHAR AL-BAYDAR ARE ALSO BEING

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State Dept. review completed

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1. THESE REPORTS MAY BE EXAGGERATED OR ERRONEOUS.

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IN OUR
VIEW, HOWEVER, THEY ARE INDICATIONS OF WHAT MAY BE
THE MOST CRITICAL POINT OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI CONTACT:
THE DAMASCUS HIGHWAY. THE SYRIANS MAY CONSIDER THIS A RED
LINE SINCE ISRAELI CONTROL OF THE ROAD WOULD CUT
OFF IDF TROOPS TO THE WEST. WE MAY WANT TO FOCUS
OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A DISENGAGEMENT ON THE
HIGHWAY.

1. OFFICIAL AT AIRPORT HAS INFORMED US THAT
CONTRARY TO RADIO LEBANON REPORT ON SHELLING OF
JUZAI, NEAREST BOMBARDMENTS HAVE BEEN IN VICINITY
OF KHALDAH, SOUTH OF THE AIRPORT.
MILLON

END OF MESSAGE

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